

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 ACDA-12 SY-05 MCT-02 HA-05
IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08 /117 W
-----047302 311710Z /42

R 311648Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5938
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: TERRORISM-ENGENDERED TENSIONS PERSIST

REF: MADRID 9978

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVT HAS MOVED QUICKLY TO COUNTER THE
CROSS-CUTTING CRITICISMS ENGENDERED BY THE RECENT
ASSASSINATIONS OF POLICEMEN (REFTEL). IT HAS SUSPENDED
FOUR OFFICIALS OF THE POLICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE AUGUST 29 COMMUNIQUE CRITICAL OF THE PARTIES,
THE GOVT AND THE KING, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY BEGINNING
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WHAT MAY BE THOROUGH-GOING PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE
POLICE HIERARCHY, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE POLICE EFFECTIVE-
NESS IN THESE TERRORISM CASES. THIS FIRM RESPONSE
INDICATES HOW SERIOUSLY THE GOVT TAKES THE FORMER
CHALLENGE TO ITS AUTHORITY AND THE LATTER CRITICISMS
OF POLICE EFFICACY, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW GOOD
A GRIP THE GOVT HAS ON THE PROBLEM. ITS TASK IS MADE ALL

THE MORE DIFFICULT BY THE FACT THAT PERSONNEL SHUFFLES AIMED AT IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS WILL LIKELY EXACERBATE THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEM, AT LEAST IN THE IMMEDIATE TERM. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOVT HAS MOVED ON TWO FRONTS TO DEAL WITH THE PUBLIC CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES PRECIPITATED BY THE FOUR ASSASSINATIONS REPORTED REFTEL AND PREVIOUS:

-- ON THE ONE HAND, IT HAS SUSPENDED AND REVOKED THE LICENSE TO BEAR ARMS OF THE THREE LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL POLICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AUGUST 29 COMMUNIQUE (REFTEL) CRITICIZING THE GOVT (AND BY IMPLICATION THE KING) AND CALLING ON THE PEOPLE TO PRESSURE FOR A TOUGHER GOS POSTURE. SIMILAR DISCIPLINARY ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST A FOURTH POLICE OFFICIAL, THE PRESIDENT OF THE BASQUE REGIONAL POLICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, WHICH ISSUED AN EVEN TOUGHER COMPANION COMMUNIQUE AUGUST 30.

-- ON THE OTHER, AND AS PREDICTED YESTERDAY BY EL PAIS (REFTEL), INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA HAS INITIATED WHAT MANY BELIEVE WILL BE A SERIES OF DISMISSALS WITHIN THE PUBLIC ORDER APPARATUS, BY RELIEVING THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE DOCUMENTATION SECTION AND THE CHIEF OF TECHNICAL CABINET OF THE UNDER SECRETARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR PUBLIC ORDER. THESE ACTIONS ARE UNDERSTOOD TO GROW OUT OF CHARGES OF INVESTIGATORY INEFFECTIVENESS, AND ARE BELIEVED UNRELATED TO THE IMBROGLIO OVER THE COMMUNIQUE.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, A TOUGH OFFICIAL STATEMENT LAST NIGHT BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SECURITY (DGS) ACCUSES THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INSUBORDINATE COMMUNIQUE OF HAVING FAILED TO LIVE UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, BLASTS THEM FOR HAVING ATTEMPTED TO PLACE THE BLAME FOR THE ASSASSINATIONS INDIRECTLY ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE PARTIES, THE GOVT AND EVEN THE KING (IN THAT THEY CRITICIZE THE KING'S AMNESTIES/PARDONS), AND REMINDS ALL POLICEMEN THAT THEIR FIRST OBLIGATION IS TO RESPECT AND OBEY THE LAW. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MANY MEMBERS OF THE MADRID POLICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION ALSO HAVE TAKEN STRONG EXCEPTION TO THE AUGUST 29 COMMUNIQUE, CHARGING THAT THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED IN ITS PREPARATION AND DO NOT AGREE WITH ITS CONTENT. MOREOVER, DURING A MEETING IN MADRID ON AUGUST 30 OF THE COUNTRY'S POLICE CHIEFS WITH MARTIN VILLA, THE MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT ALSO REPORTEDLY SUPPORTED THE GOVT'S ACTIONS AND EXPRESSED DISAGREEMENT

WITH THE AUGUST 29 AND 30 CRITICAL COMMUNIQUE.

4. MEANWHILE, ETA'S POLITICAL/MILITARY WING, IN A COMMUNIQUE SENT TO A SAN SEBASTIAN NEWSPAPER, HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IRUN ASSASSINATION. THE STATE-MENT DESCRIBES THE SLAYING AS "THE BEGINNING OF A PER-MANENT OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE REPRESSIVE FORCES, WHICH WILL LAST UNTIL THEIR TOTAL DISSOLUTION." IT CONTINUES TO BE ASSUMED THAT SOME SPLINTER OF ETA ALSO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOURTH (MONDRAGON) ASSASSINATION, ALTHOUGH A HERETOFORE UNKNOWN GROUP, THE AUTONOMOUS MILITARY ORGANIZATION (ORGANIZACION MILITAR AUTONOMA) HAS CLAIMED THE SLAYING IN A SEPARATE COMMUNIQUE TO THE SAME SAN SEBASTIAN NEWSPAPER.
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5. COMMENT: THE GOVT'S FIRM RESPONSE TO THE POLICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE, AND IT INDICATES JUST HOW SERIOUSLY THE GOVT TAKES THIS CHALLENGE TO ITS AUTHORITY. BUT ALL OF THIS COMMOTION LEAVES THE QUESTION OF THE POSSIBLE COORDINATION OF THE FOUR ASSASSINATIONS UNANSWERED, AND MAY ONLY SHARPEN CONCERNS GENERATED BY THEM. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW WELL IN HAND THE GOVT HAS THIS DISCIPLINE PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT MEMBERS OF THE ARMED POLICE AND CIVIL GUARD REJECTED OVERTURES FOR SUPPORT FROM THE AUTHORS OF THE AUGUST 29 COMMUNIQUE, AND THAT OBVIOUSLY IS A HOPEFUL SIGN. BUT THE GOVT'S TASK IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY THE FACT THAT PERSONNEL ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE OBVIOUS INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICE'S ANTI-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TERRORISM EFFORTS WILL VERY LIKELY EXACERBATE THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEM, AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE TERM. TODMAN

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